



Rewarding Learning
ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2025

History

Assessment Unit A2 2
Historical Investigations and Interpretations



AHY21

[AHY21]

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE, MORNING

TIME

2 hours 30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided.
Answer **three** questions from your chosen option. Answer Question **1**, Question **2** and **either** Question **3(a)** or **3(b)**.
Indicate clearly on your Answer Booklet which option you have chosen.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 80.
Quality of written communication will be assessed in Question **3**.

Option 1: England 1558–1603

Answer Questions **1 and 2** and either Question **3(a)** or **3(b)**.

Read the sources and answer the questions which follow:

The Catholic Threat to Elizabeth I 1558–1603

Source 1

Extract from Pope Pius V's Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth I, published on 25 February 1570.

The ungodly have grown in power to the extent that there is no place left in the world uncorrupted by their wicked doctrines. Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime, has assisted in this corruption. This woman, having seized the crown and assumed the role of Supreme Head of the Church in all England, has once again reduced this same kingdom – which had already been restored to the Catholic faith – to a miserable ruin. Therefore, exercising my Papal power, I declare Elizabeth to be a heretic and a supporter of heretics, and declare that her followers are to be excommunicated. I also declare her to be deprived of her pretended title of Queen of England. All the nobles and people of England who have in any way sworn oaths to her are declared to be freed from such oaths. Furthermore, they must not obey her orders and laws, and those who do so will be included in this sentence of excommunication.

Source 2

Extract from a letter from Lord Burghley to Sir Francis Walsingham, 11 February 1572.

I cannot tell you what is the real cause of the delay in the Duke of Norfolk's execution, only that I find Her Majesty Elizabeth I uncertain about the matter. Sometimes, when she speaks of the danger she is in, she concludes that justice should be done. At other times, she talks about how closely related Norfolk is to her, and then she declines to sign the death warrant. On Saturday she signed a warrant for his execution on the following Monday, and so all preparations were made and many thousands gathered yesterday morning, but instead they witnessed the execution of someone else. The reason for this sudden development was that on Sunday, late at night, the Queen sent for me and said that she was deeply disturbed by the thought that the Duke should die the next day. She said that she would have a new warrant made that night for the sheriffs, suspending their previous orders until they received further instructions.

1 (a) Use Source 1 and your knowledge of this period.

How valuable is Source 1 to an historian as evidence in a study of the Catholic threat to Elizabeth I in the period 1558–1603? [15]

(b) Use Source 1 and Source 2 and other evidence you have studied.

How far do the sources support the view that Elizabeth I responded to the Catholic threat to her life and her throne in a moderate manner in the period 1558–1603? [20]

Elizabeth I's Relationship with her Parliaments 1558–1603

Interpretation A

Extract from S. Greenblatt and J. Morrill, *Elizabeth I*, published in 2023.

A blend of charm and arrogance characterised Elizabeth I's relations with her Parliaments. Many sessions of Parliament, particularly in the early years of her rule, were more than co-operative. But the issues of marriage and the succession provoked complex and often bitter negotiations between Crown and Commons. More radical members of Parliament wanted their debates to include broad areas of public policy; the Queen's spokesmen struggled to restrict discussion to government bills. Elizabeth had a rare gift for combining calculated displays of stubbornness with equally calculated displays of graciousness and, on rare occasions, a sensible willingness to concede. Whenever possible, she transformed the language of politics into the language of love, likening herself to the spouse or the mother of her kingdom. Characteristic of this strategy was her famous 'Golden Speech' of 1601, when, in the face of bitter parliamentary opposition to royal monopolies, she promised reforms.

Interpretation B

Extract from C. Russell, *The Crisis of Parliaments: English History 1509–1660*, published in 1974.

The Queen's failure to exclude the House of Commons from matters of state and public policy was partly brought about by her Privy Councillors. As wise politicians, they sometimes put forward the Queen's point of view, but they joined with the Commons often enough to show that they had no firm conviction that the Commons should not discuss matters of state. Moreover, on religion, a number of them, particularly Sir Walter Mildmay and Sir Francis Knollys, were known to sympathise with the Commons rather than the Queen. This fact may have made them more persuasive when they urged the Commons to leave an issue alone, but it also made them try to do so more rarely. Even Burghley occasionally supported a religious bill which originated from the Commons. Yet the Queen's view was that there were some subjects on which the Commons should not initiate debates.

2 Study Interpretation A and Interpretation B.

Using the interpretations, and your understanding of the historical context, which of these different interpretations of Elizabeth I's relationship with her Parliaments in the period 1558–1603 do you find more convincing? [25]

3 Quality of written communication will be assessed in this question.

Either

(a) How successful was Elizabeth I in maintaining English control of Ireland during the period 1558–1603? [20]

Or

(b) “Agricultural change was the most significant economic development in England in the period 1558–1603.” To what extent would you agree with this verdict? [20]

Option 2: Ireland 1685–1714

Answer Questions 1 and 2 and either Question 3(a) or 3(b).

Read the sources and answer the questions which follow:

The Battle of Aughrim July 1691

Source 1

Extract from *A Life of William III*, written by Walter Harris and published in 1745. Harris was born in 1686. His father served in the Williamite army in Ireland.

The Irish cavalry fled, leaving their infantry to be miserably slaughtered. The English victory was considerable, since they were outnumbered. Ginkel claimed that the outcome was due to the skill of his commanders and his cavalry. However, it must be admitted that the Irish fought this intense battle with great determination. The many defeats they suffered during this war cannot be attributed to national cowardice, which some have argued. Instead, the Irish defeat was a product of poor discipline, inexperience and bad leadership. Had St Ruth not died, it is hard to say what the outcome of the battle would have been. However, the unexpected resistance and bravery of the Irish only heightens the glory of this victory for the English.

Source 2

Extract from the memoirs of Andreas Claudianus, published in 1719. A Danish officer serving in Ginkel's army, Claudianus was present at the Battle of Aughrim.

The Irish infantry and cavalry were mixed together on the ridge at the top of the hill. The firing of muskets was so intense that the ridge seemed to be on fire. As dusk fell, the Irish cavalry withdrew and began to flee. The infantry, having been abandoned, threw down their weapons and ran, abandoning their colours. Terrible scenes followed. The English attacked the fleeing Irish with vigour, and the Irish were stricken with terror. They fled in all directions, running into the forests and bogs, weeping and wailing like mad people. Some were wounded and in great pain, and begged to be put out of their misery. The scene of horror cannot be imagined except by those who saw it.

1 (a) Use Source 1 and your knowledge of this period.

How valuable is Source 1 to an historian as evidence in a study of the outcome of the Battle of Aughrim in July 1691? [15]

(b) Use Source 1 and Source 2 and other evidence you have studied.

How far do the sources support the view that the outcome of the Battle of Aughrim in July 1691 was determined by the inferior quality of the Jacobite army? [20]

The Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland 1691–1714

Interpretation A

Extract from M. Wall, *The Age of the Penal Laws*, published in 1967.

The Williamite victory in the war was decisive, and the Irish Parliament, now entirely Protestant, soon set about strengthening Protestant ascendancy in all walks of life. It is not surprising that MPs should have done everything in their power to retain their privilege. Members of the Church of Ireland were restored to their position as first-class citizens. Catholics and Protestant non-conformists were again made to pay tithes. A comprehensive set of new anti-Catholic laws was passed. This was designed to maintain Protestant control of land and keep Catholics under control and in a permanent state of inferiority. Catholics were barred from Parliament and government office and were totally excluded from all areas of professional and political life. This was achieved by imposing oaths on anyone who wished to enter public office, although Catholics were still free, to a great extent, to generate wealth in trade and industry. Protestant supremacy was also achieved by depriving Catholics of their land.

Interpretation B

Extract from L. Cullen, *Ireland under the Penal Laws*, published in 2019.

Overall, the impact of the Penal Laws in creating a 'Protestant Ascendancy' has been exaggerated. This is obvious as far as Catholic worship is concerned. However, in terms of property and politics, the results have also been greatly overstated. Although Catholics could not vote or sit in Parliament, they could still play quite a prominent role in political life. Many Catholics acted as middlemen for Protestant landowners and thus could influence the votes of Protestant tenants. Catholics who converted to Protestantism to keep their land often held great power and influence, and their outlook almost always remained sympathetic to the Catholic cause. In some counties, formerly Catholic families who had converted to Protestantism quietly pushed out established Protestant families from politics. In terms of property, politics and careers, not only did Catholic power exist, but it actually flourished during the Penal Laws. Converts included, there was no decline in the existing pattern of Catholic land ownership during this period. Catholic influence in the wider sense actually increased during the so-called 'Protestant Ascendancy'. Historians should, therefore, avoid using this term.

2 Study Interpretation A and Interpretation B

Using the interpretations, and your understanding of the historical context, which of these different interpretations of the extent of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland in the period 1691–1714 do you find more convincing? [25]

3 Quality of written communication will be assessed in this question.

Either

- (a) “The policies of James II in England in the period 1685–1688 were not anti-Protestant. They aimed simply to achieve equality for Catholics”. To what extent do you agree with this statement? [20]

Or

- (b) “The Earl of Tyrconnell was unsuccessful in his efforts to improve the power and position of Catholics in Ireland in the period 1685–1689”. How far would you accept this verdict? [20]

Option 3: Ireland 1778–1803

Answer Questions **1 and 2** and either Question **3(a)** or **3(b)**.

Read the sources and answer the questions which follow:

The United Irishmen 1796–1798

Source 1

Extract from information given by Theobald Wolfe Tone to the French government in February 1796. Tone had only recently arrived in Paris from the United States.

If France attempts to separate Ireland from England, it would certainly be successful. Firstly, the Presbyterians support the United Irishmen, are hostile to England and are in favour of the French. Secondly, three million Catholics are eager to break away from England, and they are bound by their Defender oath to be loyal to France. The Presbyterians and Catholics are thus united, and they comprise nine-tenths of the Irish population. The British Government cannot rely on the militia, since most of them are Irish. Ten thousand militiamen are actually sworn Defenders. The United Irishmen would have support from the entire province of Ulster, which is the most heavily populated, the most warlike and the most politically informed part of Ireland. With French help, it would be impossible for the loyalist Anglican aristocracy in Ireland to make a stand to defend the connection with England.

Source 2

Extract from a letter by the Reverend Edward Hudson to Lord Charlemont, 19 May 1798. Hudson was the Church of Ireland minister in Portglenone, County Antrim. Charlemont was a Whig peer in the Irish Parliament. Both men were opposed to the United Irishmen.

The Orangemen have destroyed many houses belonging to those sympathetic to the United Irishmen. In Lisburn, the Orange Order is increasing with astonishing speed. All the way to County Louth I found support for the Orange Order growing – except in County Down, where the United Irishmen remain strong. On your own County Armagh estate there is a new yeomanry company who are almost all Orangemen. Meanwhile, the former Ballymascanlon Volunteer Company near Newry were all United Irishmen up to six months ago, but now they are Orangemen due to their suspicion of Catholics. I heard from a gentleman from Cork that Orangeism is growing there too. In speaking of the astonishing increase in the Orange Order, I forgot to mention the most wonderful part of it – that immense numbers of them are in Belfast.

1 (a) Use Source 1 and your knowledge of this period.

How valuable is Source 1 to an historian as evidence in a study of the strategy of the United Irishmen in 1796? [15]

(b) Use Source 1 and Source 2 and other evidence you have studied.

How far do the sources support the view that there was total support in Ireland for the United Irishmen in the period 1796–1798? [20]

Robert Emmet's Rebellion 1803

Interpretation A

Extract from M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France*, published in 1982.

The traditional view of Emmet as a romantic visionary, and of his rebellion as a project doomed from the outset, requires some reappraisal. Emmet had an impressive array of weapons, which included sophisticated rockets. He also had strict plans to capture Dublin Castle and take his enemies prisoner rather than kill them. His confident proclamation of a Provisional Government proved that he was not blindly dependent on France. Emmet's expectation that the country would rise again was not unrealistic. The enthusiasm of those groups who attacked the well-armed government soldiers on 23 July 1803 showed what could have been achieved, especially if the French had arrived in support. The original plan of a surprise attack on the nerve-centre of English rule in Ireland (with action spreading out from Dublin) was later admitted by the government to have been impressive. The Irish Government remained completely ignorant of his plans. Emmet had proved that careful planning and able leadership could defy the superior strength of the military.

Interpretation B

Extract from R. Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume 1: The Most Distressful Country*, published in 1972.

Emmet's plan in itself was reasonable and practical, but its execution was pathetic to the point of farce. Bad luck played its part but need not have played such a disastrous role if organisation and leadership had been efficient. There was a trail of disasters after the accidental explosion at Emmet's Patrick Street arms depot a week earlier. There was a lack of any firm leadership. Apart from sending Thomas Russell into Ulster, the only practical arrangements were with the men of Kildare and the 1798 veterans holding out in the Wicklow Mountains under the leadership of Michael Dwyer. But these arrangements proved highly unreliable. As late as five o'clock on the day of the Rising, Emmet was still trying to find the money to buy guns. The man who was to make the fuses for the explosive devices forgot them. A large number of men were expected. By nine o'clock in the evening, however, very few had arrived. As Emmet drew his sword and led them into the night in the name of an Irish Republic, many were drunk.

2 Study Interpretation A and Interpretation B.

Using the interpretations, and your understanding of the historical context, which of these different interpretations of Robert Emmet's leadership of the Rebellion of 1803 do you find more convincing?

[25]

3 Quality of written communication will be assessed in this question.

Either

- (a)** “The success of the Patriots in the Irish Parliament between 1779 and 1782 can only be explained by reference to the impact of the American War of Independence.” To what extent would you accept this verdict? [20]

Or

- (b)** “The concessions granted to Irish Catholics through the influence of the British Government between 1778 and 1793 meant that Catholic demands had been completely satisfied.” How far would you agree with this judgement? [20]

Option 4: Partition of Ireland 1900–1925

Answer Questions 1 and 2 and either Question 3 (a) or 3 (b).

Read the sources and answer the questions which follow:

The Causes of the Easter Rising of 1916

Source 1

Extract from a letter by John Dillon MP, Deputy Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), to Sir Matthew Nathan, British Under-Secretary to Ireland, 28 November 1914. Dillon is highlighting his concerns about the impact of the First World War on the IPP.

This war, coming just before we finally secured Home Rule, has created terrible difficulty and embarrassment for us. Up until the beginning of this month, the War Office and other government authorities have done nothing but add to our difficulties. Nevertheless, we have retained the confidence of most nationalists in Ireland and secured their support for England in this war. I do not believe that the Sinn Féiners and pro-Germans are making any headway against us in Ireland. Had it not been for the mistakes of the War Office, which treated with contempt any suggestions we made, many nationalists would have joined the British Army by now. There is a considerable movement in favour of recruiting since the Irish Brigades were created, and I think that movement would be strengthened by other measures, if the War Office could be persuaded to adopt them.

Source 2

Extract from the graveside oration delivered by Patrick Pearse at the funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, 1 August 1915.

I may be taken as speaking on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, and has accepted the responsibility of carrying out the Fenian programme. Our foes are strong, wise and careful; but they cannot undo the miracles of God, who ripens in the hearts of young men today the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. Rulers and Defenders of realms need to beware if they try to stop this process. Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this realm may think that they have pacified Ireland, but the fools, the fools, the fools! — they have left us our Fenian dead and, while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.

1 (a) Use Source 1 and your knowledge of this period.

How valuable is Source 1 to an historian as evidence in a study of the causes of the Easter Rising of 1916?

[15]

(b) Use Source 1 and Source 2 and other evidence you have studied.

How far do the sources support the view that the First World War was the most important cause of the Easter Rising of 1916?

[20]

Opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill 1910–1914

Interpretation A

Extract from A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798–1998*, published in 1999.

There is little doubt that opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill was directed from Ulster. The first evidence of Ulster Unionist militancy was apparent in November 1910, when the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) established a secret defence committee with a view to approaching foreign arms dealers. This attempted arming was followed in 1911 by a Unionist mass meeting held at James Craig's home. At this meeting, the menu cards had the motto 'the arming of Ulster.' The prospect of militancy was again advanced by the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant in 1912. One of the most significant elements of Ulster Unionist militancy was the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in January 1913. The UVF expanded very rapidly and by late 1913 claimed a membership of 100,000. The Larne gun-running of April 1914 was the defining episode in the opposition to Home Rule. The Liberal Government at Westminster subsequently moved further towards compromise on the Home Rule question than Asquith had been willing to do just months earlier.

Interpretation B

Extract from R. Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume 2: The Bold Fenian Men*, published in 1972.

The most significant feature of the Ulster Unionist demonstration at Balmoral in Belfast in April 1912 was the presence of Andrew Bonar Law. He was the new leader of the Conservative opposition in the House of Commons. At Balmoral he reassured his vast audience that the Conservative Party regarded their cause as the cause not of Ulster alone but of the British Empire. Bonar Law saw support for Ulster opposition as the perfect opportunity to reunite his divided party. By the time he had made his famous speech at Blenheim Palace in July 1912, he had already begun to pressurise the King to dissolve Parliament and call an election on the Home Rule issue. It was during a secret meeting with Asquith in late 1913 that Bonar Law now accepted the principle of some form of exclusion for Ulster. This marked a major turning point in the Liberals' policy towards Ireland. Bonar Law's disruption of the Annual Army Act further hampered the Liberals' ability to govern and gave confidence to Ulster Unionist resistance.

2 Study Interpretation A and Interpretation B

Using the interpretations, and your understanding of the historical context, which of these different interpretations of the opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill in the period 1910–1914 do you find more convincing? [25]

3 Quality of written communication will be assessed in this question.

Either

- (a) “The mistakes of the British Government in the period 1914–1918 were the most important reason for the success of Sinn Féin in the General Election of 1918.” To what extent would you accept this verdict? [20]

Or

- (b) “Irish Republicans were under more pressure than the British Government to agree to a truce in July 1921.” How far would you agree with this assessment of the reasons for the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish War of 1919–1921? [20]

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

Sources

- Option-1A.....© Elizabeth 1 by Stephen J. Greenblatt and John S. Morrill Elizabeth I | Biography, Facts, Mother, & Death | Britannica
- Option 1B.....© The Crisis of Parliaments: English History 1509-1660, Conrad Russell, Oxford University Press, USA(1971)
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- Option 2A.....© The Age of the Penal Laws, Maureen Wall (1967)
- Option 2B.....© Ireland Under the Penal Laws, Louis Cullen (2019)
- Option 3A.....© Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France, Marianne Elliott, Yale University Press (1982) ISBN: 9780300027709
- Option 3B.....© The Green Flag, Volume 1: The Most Distressful Country, Rober Kee (1972) Penguin Books, ISBN: 9780140147582
- Option 4A.....© Ireland 1798-1998: War and Politics First Edition, Alvin Jackson, Wiley-Blackwell (1999) ISBN: 978-0631195429
- Option 4B.....© The Green Flag, Volume 2: The Bold Fenian Men, Robert Kee, Penguin Books Ltd (1972)

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